

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

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R 301140Z JUL 76

FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2495

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LENINGRAD 1212

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EPAP, PINT, UR

SUBJECT: FOOD SUPPLIES IN LENINGRAD

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. SOME SMALLER RESTAURANTS BEGAN FISH THURSDAYS ON JULY 22, THE FIRST WE HAVE SEEN IN THE LENINGRAD AREA, AND MEAT SUPPLY HERE IS SPOTTY. SEASONAL VEGETABLES AND FRUITS CURRENTLY PLENTIFUL.
END SUMMARY.

2. BEGINNING JULY 22 A NUMBER OF LOWER GRADE EATING ESTABLISHMENTS -- AT LEAST FOUR LOCATED IN CITY CENTER, ONE ON NEVSKIY PROSPEKT -- BEGAN TO OBSERVE THURSDAY FISH DAYS, THE FIRST WE HAVE NOTED IN THE LENINGRAD AREA. ONE OF THE SIGNS ANNOUNCING THE NEW POLICY ALSO ENCOURAGED FISH DAYS AT HOME BY OFFERING EXPERT ADVICE ON PREPARATION OF FISH DISHES.

3. JULY 28-29 VISITS BY EMBOFFS TO THREE OF MAIN FARMERS' MARKETS IN LENINGRAD AREA REVEALED THAT MEAT IN COLLECTIVE MARKETS IS IN VERY SHORT SUPPLY WITH ONLY VERY LIMITED AMOUNT OF GENERALLY POOR QUALITY MEATS, MOSTLY LOW GRADE PORK, SUCH AS
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PIGS HEADS (.70K) AND PORK BACK (2.50R), ALTHOUGH ONE FARMER'S

MARKET ALSO HAD SOME PORK STEAK (4R). MEAT SITUATION IN STATE STORES IS MORE VARIABLE, BUT FEATURES MAINLY BEEF. ONE STORE ACROSS FROM LARGEST FARMER'S MARKET WAS WELL STOCKED WITH GOOD FRESH BEEF (2R), POULTRY (2.50R) AND SOME PROK. HOWEVER, MAJORITY OF STATE STORES VISITED HAD MUCH MORE LIMITED STOCK CONFINED MAINLY TO FAIRLY LEAN BEEF ROASTS (2R). ONE STATE STORE ALSO WAS PEDDLING FROZEN HUNGARIAN CHICKENS (2.50R). THERE ARE AMPLE SUPPLIES OF FROZEN FISH, OF GENERALLY SMALL VARIETIES. FISH PRICES RUN IN COLLECTIVE FARM MARKETS FROM .46K - .80 K AND IN STATE STORES FROM .50K - .86K. CHEESE AND EGGS ARE IN PLENTIFUL SUPPLY.

4. LENINGRAD'S COLLECTIVE MARKETS CURRENTLY WELL SUPPLIED WITH WIDE VARIETY OF SEASONAL VEGETABLES, OFTEN AVAILABLE WITHOUT LINES. THESE INCLUDE CUCUMBERS (2R), CARROTS (1.10R), LETTUCE (.25K SMALL BUNCH), GREEN ONIONS (1R), YELLOW ONIONS (1R), RADISHES (1.50R), CABBAGE (.60K), SMALL, NEW POTATOES (.30K LONG LINES) AND ASSORTMENT OF MUSHROOMS (2R)

4. FRESH FRUITS ALSO CURRENTLY ABUNDANT BUT, WITH EXCEPTION FRESH STRAWBERRIES (3R), ARE GENERALLY OF ONLY FAIR TO POOR QUALITY. PRICES OF MAJOR ITEMS ARE AS FOLLOWS: APPLES (2.30R), PEARS OF SMALL VARIETY (2R), APRICOTS (4.50R), CHERRIES (2R), AND PLUMS (3R). ORANGES WHICH WERE IN GOOD SUPPLY PAST WEEKEND, POSSIBLY IN CONNECTION WITH HOLIDAY OF SOVIET NAVY, WERE NOT SEEN JULY 28-29.

5. COMMENT: AN INTERESTING SIDELIGHT ON THE PROTEIN SUPPLY WAS PROVIDED DURING A RECENT QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION BY TWO JOURNALIST UNION MEMBERS AT THE ZNANIYE LECTORIUM. ALTHOUGH OTHERWISE DIFFIDENT IN ADVANCING ECONOMIC GROWTH PROJECTIONS, ONE SPEAKER DID NOTE, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, THAT HE EXPECTS 30-35 O/O INCREASE IN OUTPUT IN FISH FARMING. HE OBSERVED FISH FARMING SUPERIOR TO ORDINARY FISHING NOT LEAST BECAUSE IT MINIMIZES INTERNATIONAL FRICTIONS. AT ANOTHER POINT, SPEAKER ACKNOWLEDGED REDUCTION IN SUPPLY OF MEAT IN LAST FIVE MONTHS AND IN NUMBER OF FARM ANIMALS. HOWEVER, HE ATTRIBUTED DECLINE TO FOWL AND PIGS RATHER THAN TO BEEF CATTLE, HEADS OF WHICH HE CLAIMED EVEN HAVE INCREASED IN RECENT TIMES.

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